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## Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Jaime Munoz, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

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Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Jaime Munoz, Ph.D., OTR/L,

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice through the life history stories of occupational therapists who have held leadership roles at the national level and beyond. This particular study reflects the life history of Dr. Jaime Munoz, a leader in occupational therapy education and advocate for marginalized populations. The study design used for this project was qualitative research using a life history approach, which allowed the focus to be on the participant's involvement in the evolution of occupational therapy practice. The Kawa Model was also used to guide this project. The results revealed a final assertion that Dr. Jaime Munoz demonstrates a strong desire to have a positive impact on the occupational therapy profession through providing quality education opportunities, minimizing barriers to education, and promoting access to service for marginalized populations. He emphasizes the importance of fostering opportunities for nurturing other leaders.

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Jaime Munoz, Ph.D., OTR/L,  
FAOTA

The profession of occupational therapy has been continually developing since its establishment in 1917 to the present, and it will continue to develop into the future. Because occupational therapy focuses on a person-centered approach, it is important to study the ongoing development of the profession with the same focus. The purpose of this study is to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice through the life history stories of occupational therapists who have held leadership roles at the national level and beyond. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information. This life history is one of 30 life history interviews which are part of a larger project, *Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Level and Beyond*. This particular study reflects the life history of Dr. Jaime Munoz, a leader in occupational therapy education and advocating for marginalized populations. This study was performed as a requirement of the qualitative research course offered by the University of North Dakota Department of Occupational Therapy.

### **Timeline Literature Review**

A timeline literature review was conducted to provide the background for the study. The student researcher reviewed resources suggested by the project directors, namely Christiansen and Haertl's chapter in *Willard and Spackman's Occupational Therapy* and the American Occupational Therapy Association's Values and Beliefs papers (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014; Reed & Peters, 2010). Because Dr. Munoz began practicing in occupational therapy in the early-

mid 1980's, the timeline literature review was focused on the historical context from 1980 through the present.

During Dr. Munoz's early years of practice, there was a push in occupational therapy to advance research (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). There was also a concern for the advancement of occupational therapy education, as academia was established as a practice area (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014; Reed & Peters, 2010). In his early years of practice, Dr. Munoz also experienced the dawn of the occupational science movement in which practitioners focused on the occupational nature of humans and occupation was used as the keystone of practice (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014; Reed & Peters, 2010). Dr. Munoz also witnessed the introduction of Gary Kielhofner's Model of Human Occupation (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). During this time, licensure was separated from American Occupational Therapy Association membership and the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education was established for accreditation of education programs, separating occupational therapy from the American Medical Association, representing a shift away from the disease model in occupational therapy (Reed & Peters, 2010). Dr. Munoz was practicing when the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1991, which prohibited discrimination of individuals with disabilities (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). Also, in Dr. Munoz's early years of practice, occupational therapist employment growth slowed (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014).

In Dr. Munoz's more recent years of practice, the American Occupational Therapy Association has announced their Centennial Vision (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). There has also been a profession-wide focus on population health and occupational justice (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014).

### **Theory**

The Kawa Model was used to guide this project. It uses a metaphor of a river to understand a person, their environment, and their occupations through the lens of a collectivist culture (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). The river metaphor addresses many aspects of a person's life, including their occupational engagement, context, barriers, and supports, and how each of these factors influence each other (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). The river can also be used to describe a person's life history by addressing each of the river's components named above in an individual's life experiences. The Kawa Model was used by the project directors to develop the interview schedule, as many questions reflected concepts present in the model. The model also guided the research process, which is evident in the preliminary search for the participant's context and the ongoing, collaborative, and emergent data analysis process.

### **Description of Participant**

Dr. Jaime Munoz is an occupational therapist with over 30 years of experience and has been a teacher for over 20 years (Duquesne University, 2019a). He has practice experience in pediatrics, mental health, community-based employment, and community re-entry in Boston, Chicago, and Pittsburgh (Duquesne University, 2019a). Currently, Dr. Munoz is the program director of the occupational therapy department at Duquesne University (Duquesne University, 2019a). In addition to his identity as an occupational therapist, Dr. Munoz stated in the interview that he also is a husband and a father and enjoys participating in environmental groups including beekeeping groups and bonsai groups.

Dr. Jaime Munoz was included in this study because of his contributions to the occupational therapy profession at the national level and beyond. Through the semi-structured interview, it was discovered that these contributions include serving as the program director of

the occupational therapy department at Duquesne University, co-founder of Terapia Ocupacional para la Diversidad, Oportunidad y Solidaridad (TODOS) and Justice-Based OT, and being a member of the Mental Health Special Interest Section, the Commission on Education, and the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. As a program director, Dr. Munoz “strives to create an interpersonal climate that supports cooperation, scholarly discussion, constructive debate and commitment to every person's learning” (Duquesne University, 2019b, para. 1). During the interview, Dr. Munoz described one of the groups he founded, TODOS. He stated that TODOS means *all of us* in Spanish, and it is also a Spanish acronym for *occupational therapy for diversity, opportunity, and solidarity*. According to Dr. Munoz, as described in the interview, TODOS’ mission is to promote diversity in the occupational therapy profession. In the interview, Dr. Munoz described another group he co-founded, Justice-Based OT. He stated that Justice-Based OT strives to promote occupational therapy’s role in justice settings. As a member of the Mental Health Special Interest Section, Dr. Munoz described his role in the group being that he worked on research and the newsletter. As a member of the Commission on Education, Dr. Munoz described his work with others on educational issues. As a member of the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Dr. Munoz stated that he wrote questions for the national certification exam.

### **Methodology**

The study design used for this project was qualitative research using a life history approach, which allowed the focus to be on the participant’s involvement in the evolution of occupational therapy practice. The life history approach incorporates not only the participant’s perspective of their own life, but also seeks to frame that perspective in the context using external evidence (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The participant was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors. Because initial contact was made by the project directors, there were no specific gatekeeper issues. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview and the project was reviewed by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board and because of the study design the formal Institutional Review Board process was waived.

Types of data collected include biographical information and the interview transcription. Data was collected via internet search and *Zoom* interview. The interview took place via *Zoom* and lasted 1 hour and 50 minutes. The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the project directors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The student researchers modified or added questions as needed for each specific interview.

To establish trustworthiness, the student researcher kept a reflexive journal of initial reactions and possible biases. Data was collected from multiple sources including an internet search in addition to the semi-structured interview. The entire process was overseen by the project directors.

### **Data Analysis**

The interview was transcribed verbatim and initial memo-ing was completed. The transcription was analyzed, and 11 codes were identified. Codes are recurring words, phrases, concepts, and topics that the student researcher and project directors interpreted to be important in the participant's life experiences. These 11 codes were then sorted into three categories that emerged from the data. Two to three themes from each category were developed with supporting quotes from the codes that comprised each category. A visual data display can be found on Appendix A.



The Kawa Model and the timeline literature review were used to guide the data analysis process and the presentation of the findings. The ongoing, collaborative, and emergent data analysis process reflects the flowing, ever-changing nature of the life flow outlined by the Kawa Model. The findings that emerged from the data were viewed through the lens of the Kawa Model.

## **Results**

From the 11 codes identified during the open coding stage, three categories emerged. These are education, advocacy, and leadership. Each category contained a two to three themes. Regarding education, Dr. Munoz believes that ongoing education is critical for providing the best care for all clients, he is an advocate for life-long learning and views it as a dynamic process. He identified barriers to occupational therapy education including the Occupational Therapy Doctorate and costs of education. Pertaining to advocacy, Dr. Munoz emphasized the importance of occupational therapy and why the profession needs to be vocal in developing programs that meet the needs of clients in the community. He was an early champion for diversity within the occupational therapy profession and is an advocate for improving access to occupation for marginalized populations. Concerning leadership, Dr. Munoz has held numerous leadership positions within the profession and was honored when he met others who are building on his early efforts; he sees leadership as fostering environments in which others can flourish.

### **Education**

Three themes emerged in the education category. These themes have influenced Dr. Munoz's development as an occupational therapist and still influence his practice today.

One theme that emerged about education during the semi-structured interview is that *Dr. Munoz believes that ongoing education is critical for providing the best care for all clients*. This

theme is supported by Dr. Munoz's response to a question in which he was asked to rank several concepts by importance in influencing his practice. Ongoing education was cited as being in the top level of things influencing his practice.

Another theme about education that was evident throughout the semi-structured interview was that *he is an advocate for life-long learning and views it as a dynamic process*. This view of learning being a dynamic process is supported when Dr. Munoz says, "I think, [. . .] who I've become as an OT, who you will become as an OT is all [. . .] a cumulative process".

Additionally, the importance he places on life-long learning is evident when he says, "You know, if a person enters this profession and doesn't continue to learn in formal ways, they will informally, but if they don't continue to learn in formal ways, [. . .] then I don't want them to be my OT. Because [. . .] what you're doing now, being in school, learning to be an OT, is way like just the beginning".

The final theme pertaining to education that revealed itself throughout the interview is that *Jaime Munoz identified barriers to occupational therapy education including the Occupational Therapy Doctorate and costs of education*. Dr. Munoz saying, "I think the cost of education is one of the things that really keeps me up at night" demonstrates his concern for the financial barriers that occupational therapy students face when completing their education. During the interview, it was apparent that Dr. Munoz saw the debate about the Occupational Therapy Doctorate being the profession's entry level degree as being another barrier to education. He stated, "[. . .] all the process leading up to that point, the decision to move to an OTD and then rescind that mandate, to do that has caused nothing but, in my mind, [. . .] chaos for an educator. And I think for a consumer too, it's like, do I need this degree? Do I not need this degree? What are you saying? And I think that that's [. . .] really frustrating". This

frustration and confusion experienced by individuals seeking a career in occupational therapy can become a barrier to their education.

### **Advocacy**

Three themes emerged from the advocacy category. These themes reflect some of Dr. Munoz's contributions to the occupational therapy profession.

One theme regarding advocacy that emerged throughout the interview is that *Dr. Munoz emphasized the importance of occupational therapy and why we need to be vocal in developing programs that meet the needs of clients in the community.* One way in which Dr. Munoz has advocated for occupational therapy's role in various needs of the community is by co-founding Justice-Based OT. He states, "and, again, now I think with the justice-based OT that's been [. . .] a decade or more of my time, energy, and passion [. . .] collaborating with others and putting ourselves out there saying [. . .] "hey, OT, there's this whole other area that [. . .] we're not addressing that [. . .] we have the skill sets to address"".

Another theme emerging from the category of advocacy throughout the interview with Dr. Munoz is that *he was an early champion for diversity within the occupational therapy profession.* His dedication to this facet of his career is obvious as he states, "working on diversity in our profession and trying to make a more inclusive profession was my passion". There is also living proof of his passion for diversity in the occupational therapy profession in the TODOS group he co-founded.

The final theme related to advocacy that revealed itself throughout the interview was that *Jaime Munoz is an advocate for improving access to occupation for marginalized populations.* Dr. Munoz's passion for providing occupation to marginalized populations is obvious when he says "[...] but, I guess for a lot of my career, I've been [. . .] focused on [. . .] service to those

who tend to be underserved”. Additionally, Dr. Munoz highlights the influence we all have on the access marginalized populations have to occupations, saying,

at some level, we legislate and decide what [. . .] ways we’re going to help one another or not, to add to the common good or not, to [. . .] have things like [. . .] health care for all or not, to take care of those with disabilities, to take care of elderly, to take care of people who maybe, you know, intellectually disabled or psychologically disabled , those, we all have rules about them that we create in society to make a hopefully [. . .] more just society. So, I think [. . .] being aware of that and seeing how that [. . .] impacts it, you know. You and I didn’t choose to be legislators. So, we’re not making the laws, but we are absolutely impacted by them. And [. . .] we do have our voice when we vote.

## **Leadership**

Two themes emerged from the leadership category. These themes highlight Dr. Munoz’s commitment to others through his leadership experiences.

One theme about leadership that was apparent throughout the interview was that *Dr. Munoz has held numerous leadership positions within the profession and was honored when he met others who are building on his early efforts*. Some of the leadership positions Dr. Munoz has held include starting activity groups at the Menninger Foundation psychiatric institute before he became an occupational therapist, serving as Duquesne University’s Occupational Therapy Department head, being a member of the Mental Health Special Interest Section, the Commission on Education, writing National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy exam questions, and co-founding Justice-Based OT and TODOS. Dr. Munoz’s appreciation when his leadership has made an impact on others is evident when he says, “and if, when I have

a former student come up to me and [. . .] they tell me how they're paying it forward, then I take that that's a very cool thing".

Another theme about leadership that emerged from the interview was that *Jaime Munoz sees leadership as fostering environments in which others can flourish*. Dr. Munoz articulates this as he states, "I think about leadership like, (pause) like planting a garden. You have to do a lot of work, but when a plant bears fruit or a flower, it's the plant doing that, not you. You maybe cultivated, maybe you weeded, maybe you created an environment for that to happen. That's your job as a leader, is to be able to make space for others to flourish".

### **Final Assertion**

Through data analysis, one final assertion emerged that captures the themes, categories, and codes developed from the interview. *Dr. Jaime Munoz demonstrates a strong desire to have a positive impact on the occupational therapy profession through providing quality education opportunities, minimizing barriers to education, and promoting access to service for marginalized populations. He emphasizes the importance of fostering opportunities for nurturing other leaders.*

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Jaime Munoz has contributed to the evolution of occupational therapy. Dr. Munoz's provision of quality education opportunities for his students has prepared a multitude of therapists to serve clients. His efforts to minimize barriers to occupational therapy education through his work on the Commission on Education have influenced the education of countless occupational therapy students throughout the nation. Dr. Munoz's promotion of access to services for marginalized populations has not only improved occupational opportunities for those populations, but has brought these issues into the spotlight, raising society's awareness of those

populations' needs. His nurturing leadership style has fostered the growth of many occupational therapists and students, who in turn influence the profession as a whole. Dr. Jaime Munoz truly has fulfilled his strong desire to have a positive impact on the occupational therapy profession.

Dedication to providing quality education and minimizing barriers to education reflect the attitudes of the profession in his early years of practice. The concern for the advancement of occupational therapy education and the establishment of academia as a practice area obviously impacted Dr. Munoz's development as an occupational therapist, as he has continued to promote the advancement of education as an occupational therapist in academia (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014; Reed & Peters, 2010). Dr. Munoz's service to marginalized populations is congruent with the profession's contemporary focus on occupational justice (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). It is evident that Dr. Munoz not only has been influenced by the profession's focus on occupational justice, but he has been a driving force in the continued focus on this important concept in the profession.

Dr. Jaime Munoz's life history can be described in the context of the Kawa Model. Dr. Munoz's life history includes different life flows at different points in time (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). His life history addresses barriers to occupational engagement (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). And most importantly, Dr. Munoz's life history highlights not only the effect the context of his life has had on him, but on the effect he has had on the context around him (Turpin & Iwama, 2011).

This project is relevant to the occupational therapy literature because it has added to the professional body of knowledge by adding yet another perspective on the development of the occupational therapy profession that will be useful for examining the history of occupational therapy practice.

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## Appendix A

## Visual Data Display

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Jaime Munoz, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

Kaitlyn Berglund, MOTS

CODES		
Access to Education	Access to Health Care	Leadership Philosophy
Life-Long Learning	Diversity in the Profession	Mentorship
OTD	Marginalized Populations	Professional Involvement
Personal Educational Journey	Marketing the Profession	

CATEGORIES		
Education	Advocacy	Leadership

## THEMES

<u>Education</u>	<u>Advocacy</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
<p>Dr. Munoz believes that ongoing education is critical for providing the best care for all clients.</p> <p>He is an advocate for life-long learning and views it as a dynamic process.</p> <p>Jaime Munoz identified barriers to occupational therapy education including OTD and costs of education.</p>	<p>Dr. Munoz emphasized the importance of occupational therapy and why we need to be vocal in developing programs that meet the needs of clients in the community.</p> <p>He was an early champion for diversity within the occupational therapy profession.</p> <p>Jaime Munoz is an advocate for improving access to occupation for marginalized populations.</p>	<p>Dr. Munoz has held numerous leadership positions within the profession and was honored when he met others who are building on his early efforts.</p> <p>Jaime Munoz sees leadership as fostering environments in which others can flourish.</p>

ASSERTION
<p>Dr. Jaime Munoz demonstrates a strong desire to have a positive impact on the occupational therapy profession through providing quality education opportunities, minimizing barriers to education, and promoting access to service for marginalized populations. He emphasizes the importance of fostering opportunities for nurturing other leaders.</p>